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STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AFR/SP
NAIROBI FOR SFO
NSC FOR PMARCHAM, MMAGAN, AND TSHORTLEY
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SUBJECT: SOUTHERN SUDAN - RELIEF TO RECOVERY PROGRESS IN CENTRAL
EQUATORIA STATE

KHARTOUM 00000766 001.2 OF 002

SUMMARY

(U) From April 28 to April 30, the Director of USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) traveled to Lainya and Yei counties in Central Equatoria State, Southern Sudan, to meet with USAID/OFDA partners and local government authorities to review the impact of USAID/OFDA-funded programs on vulnerable populations. Lainya County, with an estimated population of 200,000 people, experienced significant displacement during the civil war. However, Lainya County is further along than most other counties in Southern Sudan in transitioning away from emergency relief aid to more sustainable recovery and development assistance. The USAID/OFDA Director visited CHF International, ZOA Refugee Care (ZOA), and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) activities in Lainya County. End Summary.

SUSTAINABLE HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

1. (U) Since March 2005, the USAID/OFDA-funded ZOA primary health care project in Lainya County has provided life-saving services to more than 95,000 people at its three primary health care centers and 11 primary health care units. The total population of the county is more than 200,000 people. Approximately, 23 percent of those treated at the facilities are recent returnees. With the sustainability of the project as a primary focus, ZOA constructed permanent brick facilities. Many internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees cite the availability of quality health care as a factor in influencing their decision to return to the county. Prior to the project there was no county health department. In addition to ZOA's health care program, the Lainya County Health Department employs 15 professional health staff and manages 30 community-based health workers and 30 vaccinators. Curative services are increasingly demanded due to demonstrated professional service, medicine availability, and motivated staff. By December 2007, ZOA expects that all 11 primary health care units and 3 primary health care centers in Lainya County will be ready to be handed over to the county health department.

2. (U) Further evidence of the functionality of the Lainya County Health Department is the fact that the Lainya County Medical Officer

and the Primary Health Care Supervisor have actively lobbied and negotiated with the Central Equatoria State health authorities to incorporate the county health department staff into the state public service payroll and health budget. The county health department staff are not yet paid by the government, but all the necessary procedures have been completed to soon make this a reality. This has increased the confidence of the staff and opened vital communication linkages between the county health department and the Central Equatoria State health and public service authorities. The Lainya County Health Department plans to further engage the Central Equatoria State authorities in other key health areas such as the provision of pharmaceuticals.

13. (U) What started as an USAID/OFDA-funded emergency health care project in 2005 is clearly transitioning into what will soon become a self-sustaining county government-managed curative and preventative quality health care program.

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

14. (U) The NPA food security and rural livelihoods program funded by USAID/OFDA supports returnees and other vulnerable residents in Lainya County. Using an integrated approach, including the provision of relief food, agricultural inputs such as seeds and tools, and training, the program has assisted the conflict-affected population to revitalize their livelihoods. More than simply distributing agricultural inputs, the program offers extension training with the goal of increasing agricultural productivity and reducing dependency on relief food. Agriculture support activities are planned and coordinated at the Kenyi Farmer Training Center. The Kenyi Farmer Training Center hosts food security and agriculture training workshops and other farmer outreach activities.

15. (U) Since 1998, NPA's program has established 22 farmer training centers throughout Southern Sudan. These farmer training centers

KHARTOUM 00000766 002.2 OF 002

have played a major role in the transfer of agricultural technology to rural areas, as well as providing demonstration plots that educate farmers on improved agronomical practices. As a result of the targeted beneficiaries having attained a reasonable level of food security, 13 of the 22 farmer training centers have been handed over to local county agriculture departments. However, with the large number of returnees expected from refugee camps in Uganda and IDP camps in Central Equatoria State, USAID/OFDA continues to support the Kenyi Farmer Training Center in Lainya County through the provision of seeds, tools, and training.

16. (U) Through April 2007, the project has distributed agricultural supplies to 1,204 returnee households in the county, representing nearly 100 percent of the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) registered returning population in the county. The inputs provided will enable these returnee households to increase their areas of cultivation by up to 1.5 fedans and will reduce the returnees' dependency on relief food in the county. Another significant result of this project is that the Lainya County Agriculture Department, through the project's capacity building component, has been able to support the formation of six rural farmer groups with a total of 88 members. Since its inception in 1998, the Kenyi Farmer Training Center has trained 1,365 farmers, including 375 women. The training has enabled these farmers to significantly increase maize and sorghum yields and has resulted in a considerable decrease in dependency on relief food in Lainya County. With as many as 30,000 to 50,000 additional people expected to return to Lainya County in the next two years, the Kenyi Farmer training Center will play a vital role in the food security of the county.

17. (U) To support women's livelihoods, CHF International has also started a women's bakery project, providing the direct beneficiaries with business skills and cash income. The bakery project injects more cash into the local economy, as well as providing quality bread for the community. In addition, the bakery has increased Lainya community's pride. The county commissioner claims that the bakery

produces, "better bread than any available for purchase in Juba and Yei." In the coming months, the women's group will receive business training in areas including bookkeeping, profit-loss margin analysis, and management in order to build the sustainability of the small business enterprise.

18. (U) To engage youth and ex-combatants, CHF International has initiated carpentry skills and business training. The program trains young men in carpentry through practical experience. To date, the direct beneficiaries have produced more than 60 pieces of high quality wood furniture and have a firm understanding of basic carpentry. Each of the trained youth receive a package of tools to start up their own businesses, as well as business skills training emphasizing how to start and manage a small business.

COMMENTS

19. (U) USAID/OFDA-funded relief programs have laid the foundation for sustainable economic recovery and development in health care, agriculture, food security, and livelihoods. With the return of thousands of displaced people to Southern Sudan, transitioning from relief-oriented programs to assistance that facilitates the long-term economic recovery and development are critical. USAID/OFDA understands that visible peace dividends play a key role in supporting the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and is working with other USAID offices to ensure that communities continue to see tangible improvements in their communities.

POWERS